

**NASHOBA REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

Remote meeting via Zoom Technology

This meeting was held remotely, the Nashoba Regional School Committee adheres to Open Meeting Law (OML) Regulations, which have been altered. Here is a link to that order: <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2021/Chapter20>

March 15, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE IN ATTENDANCE: Joseph Gleason, Leah Vivirito, Amy Vessels, Amy Cohen, Shandor Simon, Brett Collins, Mike Horesh, Sharon Poch, Scott Powell and Maureen Mazzone

ABSENT: Karen Devine

6:31 PM Call to Order of Regular Meeting and Pledge of Allegiance

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

6:32 PM CONSENT AGENDA

<u>WARRANT NO.</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>
4346	3/17/23	VENDOR FY23	\$464,593.48
4347	3/17/23	AP ACH FY23	\$372,277.85
4348	3/17/23	BENEFIT FY23	\$14,682.22
4349	3/17/23	PAYROLL FY23	\$1,710,432.29

Draft meeting minutes of March 1, 2023

MOTION

Mike Horesh moved to approve the consent agenda of March 15, 2023 containing the draft meeting minutes of March 1, 2023 and the warrants of March 17, 2023; seconded by Leah Vivirito

Roll Call:

Joseph Gleason	Yes
Leah Vivirito	Yes
Amy Vessels	Yes
Mike Horesh	Yes
Amy Cohen	Yes
Brett Collins	Yes
Maureen Mazzone	Yes
Shandor Simon	Yes
Sharon Poch	Yes
Scott Powell	Yes

VOTED AND PASSED. (10-0-0)

6:37 PM SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON UPDATE

No Update

6:38 PM SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT

Superintendent Downing and Assistant Superintendent Ms. Friend provided district updates; the report can be viewed in its entirety [here](#).

6:45 PM NRHS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

No Report

6:46 PM NEW BUSINESS

DECA Travel Approval

Stavros Andreopoulos, NRHS Teacher and DECA Club Advisor, attended the meeting requesting approval for the DECA Club to travel to the National Competition in Orlando, FL advising the Team won at the state finals, the trip will include 26 students and 3 chaperones.

MOTION

Leah Vivirito moved to approve the overnight travel request to Orlando, FL for the NRHS DECA Team on 4/22/23-4/27/23 with details pending to be brought forward at the next School Committee Meeting.; seconded by Sharon Poch

Roll Call:

Joseph Gleason	Yes
Leah Vivirito	Yes
Amy Vessels	Yes
Mike Horesh	Yes
Amy Cohen	Yes
Brett Collins	Yes
Maureen Mazzone	Yes
Shandor Simon	Yes
Sharon Poch	Yes
Scott Powell	Yes

VOTED AND PASSED. (10-0-0)

7:01 PM BUSINESS AND OPERATIONS REPORT

Mr. Mulkerin provided the FY23 February Results of Operations report. Mr. Mulkerin advised that the DECA Program has received two donation each in the amount of \$500.00 from Eastern Bank and Workers Credit Union to be used to support the costs for students that have qualified for the National Competition in April.

MOTION

Mike Horesh moved to accept the donations in the amount of \$500.00 from Eastern Bank and \$500.00 from Workers Credit Union to be used to support the costs for students that have qualified for the National Competition in April; seconded by Leah Vivirito

Roll Call:

Joseph Gleason	Yes
Leah Vivirito	Yes
Amy Vessels	Yes
Mike Horesh	Yes
Amy Cohen	Yes
Brett Collins	Yes

Maureen Mazzone	Yes
Shandor Simon	Yes
Sharon Poch	Yes
Scott Powell	Yes

VOTED AND PASSED. (10-0-0)

7:08 PM UNFINISHED BUSINESS

FY24 Budget

Budget Discussion

Ms. Mazzone advised she planned on voting no on this portion of the budget, per the SC manual the first priority when it comes to voting on the budget is the educational welfare of our students and protect the interest of our towns, with that said there are several concerns over staffing and retention of staff at our schools at this time, so therefore I can't vote yes on the salary and pension part of the budget, but I do want to say the budget process was extremely transparent and there is a lot of good in the FY24 budget and I look forward to the Spring months when we can hopefully access all the data we are currently collecting and see if there are any better ways to support and adjust for the needs of our students.

Chairperson Vivirito asked Ms. Mazzone if the reason she is voting no is because she feels the towns should be contributing more funding for staffing.

Ms. Mazzone responded, "I do I think there is a need for additional staff, at least in Stow, I can't speak to the other towns, there is a lot of concern over the fact that, and I thank you for the transparency and I know the Coach role is a good move to make, it's just that with the transition I it's going to take away from our students because it's not going to be something that people love at first, and there's a fear that if the specialist are working through that transition and their time is not fully dedicated to the students, some of their time they will need to go to special education and we've already lost at least two special educators in Center School this year, so it's already a bit of a strain on the system so I feel like there's an additional need at this time rather than a change in roles.

Chairperson Vivirito stated she agrees with wishing we could pour more money into the budget but does not think it would pass at town meetings with one of our member towns going for an override for 1.5 million dollars, which is Lancaster. Any staffing changes made in Center would have to be made at all buildings across the district for fairness. Chairperson Vivirito stated for the record, while she agrees with you philosophically about adding positions, at a certain point we need to figure out how to best use the resources that we have.

Mr. Horesh stated the members have had some robust conversations over this topic in the last few meetings and those are really healthy conversations and there is no better way to carry out your role as a school committee member than to represent your constituents, there are lots of decisions the Superintendent and Administration make that are discretionary within our budget and most of those don't come to our attention, these things happen within the budget and it's important to take a broad look at what the budget represents. You do not have to love every part of the budget, we just have to make a decision on whether the board program is appropriate and we can endorse, that is the way I view looking at the budget.

Chairperson Vivirito advised 8 votes are needed to pass the budget by majority vote, with Ms. Mazzone advising she will be voting no, all other members present will need to vote yes for the budget to pass.

The committee discussed what presents a quorum for a majority vote and if Brett Collins should recuse himself from the meeting instead of abstaining from the salary vote as he has a conflict of interest with a close family member being employed with the district. After discussion, Mr. Collins will exit the meeting for this vote and return for the other budget votes.

Mr. Powell stated "he is in support of this budget, but I hear what Maureen is saying regarding staffing levels and how much we are paying staff, and I think these are conversations that should be had in June at the start

of the next session, to start laying out the framework for next year in terms what level we pay our staff and what that says about how we value education in this community and how our staff gets paid relative to other similar industries. I know we don't want taxes to go up but if we want to have the highest quality schools we need to think about what that means for pay and compensation standpoint of our teachers.

MOTION

Mike Horesh moved to adopt the FY24 Budget line items for salaries and benefits in the amount of \$52,039,225; seconded by Leah Vivirito

Roll Call:

Joseph Gleason	Yes
Leah Vivirito	Yes
Amy Vessels	Yes
Mike Horesh	Yes
Amy Cohen	Yes
Brett Collins	Exited meeting before vote
Maureen Mazzone	No
Shandor Simon	Yes
Sharon Poch	Yes
Scott Powell	Yes

VOTED AND PASSED. (8-1-0)

MOTION

Mike Horesh moved to adopt all other FY24 Budget line items for (excluding salaries and benefits) non salary, operational and assessments costs in the amount of \$12,863,405; seconded by Leah Vivirito

Roll Call:

Joseph Gleason	Yes
Leah Vivirito	Yes
Amy Vessels	Yes
Mike Horesh	Yes
Amy Cohen	Yes
Brett Collins	Yes
Maureen Mazzone	Yes
Shandor Simon	Yes
Sharon Poch	Yes
Scott Powell	Yes

VOTED AND PASSED. (10-0-0)

MOTION

Mike Horesh moved to adopt the total FY24 Budget in the amount of \$64,902,630 a 4.30% increase; seconded by Leah Vivirito

Roll Call:

Joseph Gleason	Yes
Leah Vivirito	Yes
Amy Vessels	Yes
Mike Horesh	Yes
Amy Cohen	Yes
Brett Collins	Yes
Maureen Mazzone	No
Shandor Simon	Yes
Sharon Poch	Yes
Scott Powell	Yes

VOTED AND PASSED. (9-1-0)

Warrant Process

Tabled to next meeting

7:35 PM SUBCOMMITTEE/ADVISORY REPORTS

Budget and Warrant Subcommittee

Mr. Horesh advised the focus moving forward will be having deeper discussion regarding OPEB, and the consideration of forming an advisory to dig deeper into OPEB. There will be more discussion on the warrants process at the April 12th meeting.

Communication Subcommittee

Ms. Poch reported the Communication SC is working with the Policy SC on the School Committee manual.

NRHS School Building Committee

Attorney Gleason advised the SBC meet on March 9th, the next meeting is April 6th, there is also a Public Forum schedule for the 27th of March with the discussion will be about a design update and early voting. Attorney Gleason stated he would characterize the last meeting as probably being minor “bump in the road” in this project, our designers had presented a slide presentation in regards to status update on the design, what has come to pass is preliminary before the schematic design, the district was required to submit a Preferred Schematic Report to the MSBA, that report indicated to the MSBA is what we were proposing to construct was a building of approx.. 201,000 square feet. What has transpired since we have entered into the module is the designers have informed the SBC there is a need for additional square footage approx.. 7000 square feet. The designers presented what is eligible, part eligible and fully eligible, the committee discussed at length, it was the consensus the designer should proceed with the enhanced square footage design. Attorney Gleason encouraged the members to look at the SBC meeting materials from March 9th to view the presentation, page 10.

Personnel Subcommittee

No Report

Policy Subcommittee

No Report

Advisory Reports

Audit Advisory

Ms. Mazzone reported the advisory met with the Auditors last Thursday, they are currently in the process of doing FY22, the Advisory will meet with the Auditors again in June. The next Advisory meeting the April 6th.

Diversity, Equity, Acceptance and Racial Justice Advisory (DEARJ)

Ms. Poch reported the advisory met last week and will meet again next week, the working groups will meet on two different topics, essential questions for the equity audit providers and development of a decision making tool

Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)

No Report

Regional Agreement Amendment Advisory Committee (RAAAC)

Chairperson Vivirito reported the warrant article for proposed amended Regional Agreement is in the hands of the three town administrators, some hard copies will be available at the town meeting and is posting on the district website.

7:55 PM ITEMS FOR NEXT/FUTURE AGENDAS

The committee reviewed the planning calendar for upcoming meeting items.

ADJOURN

MOTION

Amy Cohen moved to adjourn at 8:02 pm; seconded by Leah Vivirito

Roll Call:

Joseph Gleason	Yes
Leah Vivirito	Yes
Amy Vessels	Yes
Mike Horesh	Yes
Amy Cohen	Yes
Brett Collins	Yes
Maureen Mazzone	Yes
Shandor Simon	Yes
Sharon Poch	Yes
Scott Powell	Yes

VOTED AND PASSED. (10-0-0)

Reference Documents and Presentations

- Agenda
- Draft Meeting Minutes of March 1, 2023
- Superintendent's Update
- DECA Donation Approval Request
- DECA Travel Request Form
- FY23.Feb.Operations.Report
- FY24 Budget Hearing Presentation 3.8.23
- FY24 Proposed Budget 3.8.23 NRSC Meeting

Approved by NRSC 4/12/23
Submitted by Aleta Masterson

Executive Assistant to the
Superintendent/Assistant Superintendent